THE DARK SIDE of Light...
Chronicles of a Broken Shell

By Rashad El
"The Dark Side of Light..." is a small collection of my Spoken Word poetry. Some of these are older poems that I selected from my other poetry book, "(Un)spoken Word...", and others have been more recently written. Prison is a place that will either make you stronger or destroy your soul; the choice is up to that particular person. Sometimes the brightest light is found within the darkness, and a broken shell is necessary for that which is inside it to grow...
Thursday, December 6th 2018

To Whom This May Concern,

My name is Rashad El, and I am currently incarcerated at Jefferson City Correctional Center. I am submitting a book of poetry, entitled “The Dark Side of Light... Chronicles of a Broken Shell” to be considered for your “From Prison To Stage” show in September of 2019 at the Kennedy Center, and also to be published on your website. In the future, I will be having family make a donation to your site so that my book can get more publicity. Hopefully all is according to your guidelines and I am also including a SASE as instructed in your letter to me. Happy Holidays, and I appreciate your time and effort.

Sincerely,
Rashad El
#1179337
This Book Is For:

God...

My Parents...

The Woman Who Stole My Heart...Twice...

Those Trapped Behind Prison Walls

Working Towards a Better Life...

And Every Broken Shell That Has Realized

The Potential it held within itself...

I dedicate this book to you...
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Good Evening!
And welcome to our wonderful world of whites and grays, I’m sure you’ll be quite amazed at how quickly your inner light will fade, we’ll “Transform” you without Michael Bay; so...
Just step right this way and let’s start this process; I’ll chart your progress as you get drained of life, then we’ll exchange what remains in your veins with ice and inject you with a double dose of pain and strife, then you’ll get sprayed for lice;
Sir, please remove your watch; as...
CO’s who’ve forgot that they’re not super cops gather in groups to gawk as you strip nude and squat, then we’ll give you...
Old clothes with used boots and socks before you’re fed expired fruit and slop that’s been scooped from pots; and...
Don’t be afraid to take a bite even though many maggots have been mistaken for grains of rice in a kitchen invaded day and night by parades of mice; and in Canteen?
Proactive thoughts are back in stock, but we’ve raised the price because we designed this for the blinded line of mindless guys who haven’t realized with pride that they are diamonds in the rough; so they’ve...
Resigned and given up, that’s when they’re finally shipped to us; and...
The label of “offender” is what we exchange your name with; and...
Here’s a plastic container to place your brain in while we erase this space where your face is and replace it with a modified dollar sign;
YES!
We LOVE to make you do a lot of time for the smallest crimes; we’ve got to find more ways to distract you while we tax and detach you from the world you wish to get back to; keeping you trapped in a capsule of depression and despair...

-sniff sniff-
Can you smell that?
The scent of spiritual death is in the air...
The Department of Corruption; correction isn’t there, so I don’t really know what you expect to get repaired; because HERE? We only patch up aggression through disrespect, neglect, and lack of affection; so actual progressiveness is rare, because we’ve almost perfected our methods used to tear down those we keep in our warehouse that’s overcrowded from not letting the ones stuck in there out; and...
Every day they’re faced with harassment; this place is just massive, and they will grow stagnant within its units; which is why it’s no mistake that they’re fashioned in the shape of a casket,
We want you to DIE here,
AM I CLEAR?

Welcome to the DOC...
Broken Shells

Broken shells...
So many...
Broken shells...
All these...

Broken shells, thrown in jail with no posted bail; living in bathrooms known as cells, with molded soap for shelves, where the hopeless dwell; these...

Broken shells, from putting dreams in a boat that sails; praying it makes it; but nope, it failed and sank into the abyss with no Lassie to go for help; and trying to truly assist, I toss them a rope and yell “GRAB IT!”; but sadly, Satan blew me a kiss and told me I won’t prevail with saving these...

Broken shells, from years of weighing dope on scales and loading clips to explode them quick when they see the enemy while they scream obscenities; and it seems the remedy to grief and misery is weed and Hennessy; so I, TOO indulged in drugs and liquor...

Hating Asiatics, but I LOVE my hittas...

Won’t embrace my brother, but I’ll hug the trigger; I’ve succumbed to living out my mother’s biggest fear of becoming a...

Broken shell, who’s often ashamed; lost in the pain; tossed in a game with GD’s, ‘Lords, Bloods and Crips as coaches; I’ve lived with roaches; empty fridge, no groceries...

On top of that? Another eviction posted; momma praying that her kids don’t notice the lights ain’t on; she’s fiending to feed her demons, so she might stay gone all night; ain’t home to wipe spilled tears away...

But I’M STILL HERE TODAY, so how can you even TRY to sincerely say that I AIN’T STRONG? Among these...

Broken shells, with hearts as cold as snow that fell; telling jokes and tales while tobacco smoke’s inhaled; rapping rhymes to pass the time that’s moving as slow as snails; and I feel their pain, like it was wrote in Braille; these...

Broken shells that have corroded well past the point of permanent damage; but when you speak the truth? It’s like your words are mechanics that fix the mind-state, so maybe you can learn the advantage of living right; but they’re confused, like they heard it in Spanish; these...

Broken shells, who can’t decide which way to go because they don’t...

Know themselves...
Trying to hide in disguises, but all of their cloaks have bells; so as I hear them approach? I tell them,

"Stop pretending, because I can see the REAL you!"

It's been revealed through the rage and depression on facial expressions attached to heads hanging lower than "Strange Fruit"; every neck in the same noose; bagging.

"God, PLEASE let these chains loose!"...

And I hate acknowledging my faults...

So I blame you...

For the broken shells...

So many...

Broken shells...

All these...

Broken...

Shells...
Uh-oh...

It looks like they've reset and put more cheese on that same *Negro Trap*...

Yea, we go back like these 4 flats on this repo'ed 'Lac, because I'm still...

Having hood dreams of receiving kilos wrapped; those fiends want crack, so we sold packs...

Chasing a full plate, but had to eat those scraps; with plans to stack chips, no Frito snacks; just the...

*Negro Trap* of shining hard, trying to ball; check my free throw stats; I got with the program and ain't need no app to fall into a...

*Negro Trap*, as I attempt navigating through the maze with nothing but these old maps; I tried to unlock a new level, but it had a cheap broke latch, and my key don't match the lock; so I...

Tried a cheat code hack and got Dee-bo smacked by God and denied access; and I keep going back to square one, I must be crazy like the Cee-lo track; because I...

Always fall into a *Negro Trap*; trying to cop that clean coupe in tuxedo black, and please don't scratch my paint or else heat gon' clap; I...

Confess that I've been stressing from suppressing my aggression, so I chief on sacks; they claim that we don't crack; but...

If I fall into one more *Negro Trap*? I'll seriously go crazy; fair weather friends are my real foes, so keep yo daps; they're so shady and I know they won't save me as my heartbeat grows weak then finally ceases; my soul is...

Ground up into the finest of pieces as my people continue to line up for leashes that get attached to the mind they relinquish control of; THAT'S why we sold drugs and would rather have a whip on those dubs than show love to our sisters and brothers; grief is...

The only gift we give to our mothers and every time I turn around it seems I've slipped into another *Negro Trap*...
the keys

He holds the keys...

The keys to a box full of mastered thoughts; which was latched and locked, then attached to the back of a massive rock after dark; and...

That was tossed into the blackest part of the sea, so that its contents couldn’t be used to awaken the conscience of those who had fallen asleep; but...

As the sinking crate was swallowed beneath the waves, he was brave and dove in after it, passionate about breaking the latch to get to the thoughts that had been locked inside the box and set them all free; and...

Every day I had sought for the keys until I was exhausted and ceased with my search; I’d crouch down and reach in the dirt until my knees would just hurt; and kept repeating this work, thinking I was looking for something I could physically see and insert into a lock; so I was...

Truly shocked as he schooled and taught me as only the wise can do; he said...

“Rashad, these keys are tried and true, and God will provide the clues along the path that you chose while you battle your foes about what’s right to do, and...

I think that you should know these keys actually go to what's already inside of you; and...

Use them to free yourself from the shackles and chains, trapped in the same cycle of climbing, then falling back in the flames from hatching insane plans and schemes that lead to abandoned dreams and we cling to illusions for dear life because we love the dark and fear the light, plus they FEEL real...

Right?

So you don’t notice the stainless steel knife taking skilled swipes at your soul; but...

With THESE keys? You’ll gravitate right towards your goals, your life will unfold, and...
If you’re ever in the dark? They’ll provide light in the hole; so take them...

A new world you’ll discover indeed, and don’t forget to give them to the next brother in need...

So he too can hold The Keys..."
BOOM!

10...

9. 8...

I'm caged up with men possessing mind-states of primates who glorify crime rates; only concerned with CDs, what's on TV, and buying cakes off of commissary; it's...

Kind of scary knowing that being confined behind gates was my fate due to the illusions that I chased; and in this vile place? You'll...

Find snakes that lie and wait for the perfect time to make their move, because hatred's brewed when you combine racial tension with trying to escape a sentence with no defined date for your freedom; but I still grind based upon blind faith, even with the pessimists pushing me to

7. 6...

I could have chosen ANY path instead of this, but I settled with coming to a place that I'll NEVER miss when I'm released; I...

Just want some kind of peace, because I'm getting sick of the heaviness of these boulders on my shoulders; but I'm a soldier, so I adjust to hold them with a better grip; moving towards my...

8th year of being celibate; mail call, receiving letters ripped and shredded; prison gossip? Lots are quick to spread it, and if I don't...

Gain mental leverage? Then I know where this is headed, right towards...

5. 4...

3...

I keep getting advice that I don't need from people who love to follow, but won't lead; and I...

Try to stay quiet and low-key, but can foresee turning into Jason Voorhees; pulling a sharpened pole free from my coat sleeve that'll poke deep, and...

Moving at warp-speed to make my foes bleed before these police can restore peace, because the most...

Wicked of demons have dragged me, kicking and screaming, to an Oak tree while my soul pleads,

"No! Please!"

But it's too late, so I lose faith; and all signs of hope leave as the rope squeezed around my throat proceeds to choke me; but somehow, I slide my hand in my pocket and manage to drop this quote that I've wrote, and the note reads...
“2...1...”

I knew someday I’d see this brood come pay me a visit, because I was too dumb and greatly persistent to stop and think,

“Walt, maybe I’m tripping...”

I went down to Alabama for school; flunked, then got recruited; active duty; left home again, went back for New Years; and I spent it with my crew drunk and high; we smoked too much to hide; we partied, and...

I was not worried until I went back to boot camp and dropped dirty so the Army felt justified when they said,

“You’re THROUGH, son...”

So I leaped into the streets with a huge jump, got a few guns, and thought I was chasing cake, but really pursued crumbs; playing the game until I had bruised thumbs, and now I sleep in a bathroom on a crude bunk;

I was a fool, huh?

I finally felt reality, and the truth stung; I’m doing life now, no help from the White House; how do I view Trump? He’s...

True scum, I can’t believe this dude won; how did America choose some shrewd skunk for a president when it’s evident he’ll probably misuse funds that are...

Supplied through the budget, and lie to the public while he divides it with judges and guys that he’s trusted with information confided during private discussions; devising ways to disguise all of his ties with the Russians and hide the injustices done since back when rifles were muskets;

I’m...

Tired and disgusted; to be treated equal? We the people need to rise up to crush this oppression that’s protected and amplified by the puppets who can’t think for themselves and are terrified of a struggle; what happened to...

Standing arm-in-arm in a line, and not budging even when officers start to take out batons and they nudge us; we HAVE to come together, man; this isn’t the time to hold grudges...

Because if we don’t live with a purpose?

We’re dying for nothing...

BOOM!
TARGET PRACTICE

It's another night patrolling streets; I slowly creep, trying to control the beasts within me; yes, I keep many, and I'm the least friendly on the force; because my...

Heart is the darkest, and I don't even try to mask it;

To ME?

These ghetto hoodlums are just target practice, I want them ALL in caskets; that's why I...

Aim slugs and take plugs out of these fake thugs who try to act mean, with their hats leaned to the right or left; and...

It's my duty to find those threats and stop them from spreading, like I'm a vaccine; these...

Black teens that have dreams of being hustlers and "Trap Queens", turning their own people into crack fiends; and I've heard their raps songs about how they...

"Rot-a-tat" with the strap and clap chrome with no mask on, so how is it really THAT wrong when I do it too and look for a few to shoot? I'm just saying...

It seems kind of outrageous; I promise, I'm not racist; but my father told me that he never trusted dark faces, and that...

Animals belong in the zoo, where they've got cages; and that black means death, that's why they tend to drop cases when you kill a black man...

Because he's already dead to life, so the suburbs is where I will probably head tonight and hope I catch me one somewhere secluded while doing something stupid; because if I shoot him? He ain't got to be read his rights...

Yes, I'm a little spiteful; to hide it is hard, because I keep picturing the night my aunt Eliza was robbed; that's why I'm thankful for the people who provided this job, I even joined a brotherhood with some guys on the squad...

And put a black guy in the hospital to prove I was down; after that? They included me in their crew, I was bound by a secret handshake; and they threw in a vow to protect and serve the wealthy, so it's blue against brown; and...

Tonight? I'm drinking heavy while I'm cruising around; but I can DO that, because WE make the rules in this town; and right now? I'm in the mood for abusing a clown;

Wow, I must be in luck, there's a group of them now! So I...

Flash my lights and watch them dash in fright, but I'll let all the ones who ran get a pass tonight; because to chase them would end up being quite a task, I might just blast this fat kid trying to grab his bike;
He’s scared...

So when I approach? He act’s polite; the passive type; and I’m about to snatch his life, but first...

Let me disconnect, so they won’t catch this on my BodyCam...

Wait...

I’ve got to scan...

Ok, no witnesses, nobody’s cam to catch this; that’s my checklist, I can’t be reckless; I’ve got a lot of aggression and it’s hard to suppress it, because this anger burns through me; I feel the urge, truly; to destroy what’s already trash, just like in that *Purge* movie; and they...

Teach us the type of bullets that eat up the flesh when we join the police as cadets, so these I possess; and with ease and finesse I draw my weapon, proceeding to let loose and put three in his chest...

He drops...

Pleading for help while he’s bleeding to death; I don’t even regret squeezing to let off more rounds until there’s no sound, except him wheezing for breath; then...

**BANG!**

One to his cranium, I see his life drain from him while I’m thinking about the force and how I’m going to explain to them when they ask me, “*What happened, Sergeant?*” While I’m sitting in the Captain’s office; and I’ll...

Paint the picture like a master artist of how I told him “**STOP! PLEASE!**” and he did not freeze, just started running at top speed; threw a pistol and dropped weed; then he turned around to face me, I was afraid he would have popped me; and...

My tazer was in the car, so I pulled my Glock free, cocked, squeezed, and shot three times; and how he lunged to attack and I froze up, then flashed back to being over in Iraq as a soldier; and how I...

Felt my life was in danger, but how I think God might have sent angels to protect me; because I...

Have a beautiful wife who can cook, her name is Becky; and my...

Son plays hockey, he’s better than Wayne Gretzky; and he

Just turned 18, I went and bought him some jet skis; and my...

Captain will say that he totally understands me, and then I’ll tell him that I’ll send my condolences to the family; and he’ll tell me to lay low until they say so; and not to worry, because they’ll still keep me on the payroll; and...
How the black community is like a volcano; it erupts, and then goes back to blowing smoke out of “a-hole”; and I’ll...

Slide right out of his office with dry eyes, and endure jokes from a couple of wise guys; then I’ll probably get some pats on the back and some high-fives; because we all know that I don’t have to justify why...

He probably would have been the victim of a drive-by anyway; and...

Even though I know the public will be agitated,

I think I just did you a favor; you should congratulate me...

They say I’m messed up in the head, and maybe that’s true...

Because I HATE mirrors,

They remind me that I’m black, too...
With THESE eyes?

Man...

With THESE eyes, I’ve seen skies become filled with storm clouds while the rain pours down on worn-out souls who, instead of announcing “IT’S WAR, now!” have formed crowds for peaceful marches...

Immersed in grief and darkness, just hoping their message will reach the heartless police who target and shoot rather than protect and serve it’s...

Citizens who are stressed and nervous, but blessed with courage even though they already expect the verdict to read “Not Guilty” when these cops are cuffed then brought to justice; so honestly? How am I to trust this...

Crooked system of ours that’s ruled by henchmen who...

Took positions of power; just look and listen, you’ll see that we are not who they consider equals;

And, with THESE eyes?

I’ve seen lies spread to a race of bitter people who’ve been faced with the deceitful tales told by those who wish to keep us beneath them and away from the dirt they sweep in a heap under the rug; so they...

Tunnel in drugs that they leak in the streets, and taint the music that...

Bumps in our clubs and beats in our jeeps with lyrics that creep in our speech and sneak in our Tweets so much that we probably repeat in our sleep how much we hate each other...

And hopefully? One day we may recover...

But until then? Our women will continue to become baby’s mothers to shady brothers that post up on blocks and stoops with crack rocks in boots who’ll find ANY reason to cock and shoot...

Man, with THESE eyes?

I’ve seen dimes become prostitutes; known for knocking boots and walking the night stroll, or standing under light poles in tight clothes; hoping the cops don’t swoop down and stop them from clocking loot while they...

Lick their lips and switch their hips as potential tricks ride by in drops and coups, all because they’re in hot pursuit of their next fix; this is...
Real life, not Netflix; the struggle is harder for these...

Mothers and daughters who accept this danger of having sex with strangers, because without dope? They get sick; anger suppressed in hearts that are...

Etched with scars from repeatedly getting undressed in cars and alleys; with no calls from family to see if they're ok, if they made it home safe, or even to offer a warm plate...

And they say "Black don't crack and won't break", but I beg to differ...

Because, with THESE eyes?

I've seen guys get to the ledge and flip off the edge of the cliff of sanity when time was given for crimes committed when they were out there "trying to get it" because they were tired of living in poverty, and gave up on hitting the lottery, so they considered a robbery to be the next best route...

At least until it went south, now they're stretched out in a place where they seal areas with steel barriers...

And the first time your cell door closes? It feels scarier than being buried alive...

But they still wear the façades of thugs, and pray to the gods of drugs and sex...

Succumbing to the lust for flesh, not realizing it's just a test of willpower that reveals our ability to rise above...

And, with THESE eyes?

I've seen flies and bugs on dried-up blood covering those who have died from slugs fired because friends became enemies, and they didn't realize there was envy disguised as love until it was too late...

With THESE eyes?

I've seen things in their TRUE state...

What about you?
#FOCUSED

AHEM...

Excuse me as I clear my throat;

I’m FOCUSED, MAN...

Even when I feel provoked, because I’m...

Tired of poor man’s meals; I’m broke; money funny, but I don’t hear the joke; I’m tempted to take these pills and dope and go deal, but nope...

Instead?

I continue to build this boat that I plan to fill with hope...

BUT WILL IT FLOAT?

I don’t know... so I’m gon’ go find the proof, I MUST...

Because they tried to hide the truth from us; it’s been concealed with smoke and mirrors, they have a bold appearance; but in reality?

You KNOW they fear us, because supposedly we don’t crack, so they...

Bait and set “Negro traps”, then throw them near us, because we’ll always fall for cash and clothes; flashing golds as we smile at the diggers who pass and pose like they’re at fashion shows; we’re...

So distracted that even though our foes harass us and we continue to get thrown in caskets by those who mentally control the masses, as a whole? We’re passive; and...

Every time another tragedy strikes from police brutality? It makes people feel glad to be white, and we can’t see ourselves underneath the vanity lights; because we’re...

More concerned with earning them dollars to put in purses and wallets than the people who are burning and crosses; because we’d rather...

Waste time on developing swag, dropping cheddar on Gucci sweaters and bags than on gaining the equality we never did have; and we wonder why they still wave confederate flags; we’ve...

Now forgotten the plight of those who’ve picked mounds of cotton because we’ve become willful slaves...

Acting hard while trudging around massa’s yard in our grays, in a daze, in a maze; navigating; most are gladly taking the path of Satan, but to God I’ve been sending praise because I can see the beginning stage of the end of days; but...

My soul isn’t phased because it’s been ablaze; come within its range and you’ll need tinted shades and a Minute-Maid lemonade; going “toe-to-toe” with adversity, no Kid-N-Play...

No time to kid and play, or for watching kittens play...

Because I’m FOCUSED...
Daddy...

Daddy, daddy, is that you?

It seems like I always attract you; tall, black dudes with tattoos; that’s who I get attached to, and they...

Usually are bad news; but I’m addicted to thugs, liquor and drugs; I’m young and wild; a woman who doesn’t smile, probably because ever since I was a child? I’ve been missing your love, kisses and hugs; you were a rolling stone, so I...

Got used to mostly just hearing your voice over phones because you were only home when you got released, and your stops were brief because you only wanted a spot to sleep plus something hot to eat; and I...

Still remember that time I woke up shocked to see you trying to sneak money out of my piggy bank; my heart quickly sank, and...

You were not discreet on all of those nights when you took momma’s keys then went out to cheat and walk the streets; you caused us grief; love for you is obsolete; and my family tree is not complete because you ran through women, so I heard that I have a few siblings I never got to meet; and...

You don’t know what “honest” is; years of broken promises have shown me that talk is cheap, because...

While behind bars? You often speak of having a vision; grasping religion, and undergoing a massive transition while walking the path of a Christian; and as you chatter? I listen, because your act is convincing; even though I know that...

When free? You’ll just end up relapsing and trippin’; shacked up in the trap with your henchmen, loading straps for a mission, and your desire for cash acquisition will lead to the classic tradition of you getting out then heading right back into prison; where...

You’ll apologize and promise to do better in all of your letters, as if that is sufficient enough to make up for our family’s division being the aftermath of decisions made by you; and...

Coming up? Every day I grew more resentful as I formed a mental picture of men being all the same, only leaving scars and pain; and now? It’s so far engrained in my mind that it’s hard to change, because...

You weren’t there for my first day of school or when I learned how to swim in a wading pool, and...

You weren’t there to fix me plates of food or to put a dollar under my pillow when I’d save a tooth, and...
You weren’t there to buy me the latest shoes or to scold me when I put on a pair of daisy dukes, and...

You weren’t there to give me dating rules or when I came in first place at a track meet and it made the news...

No...

So love from you is something that I’ve never felt or seen...

But spending money is the way I’ve always dealt with things...

So when guys leave my heart cold from the break-ups?

Nice clothes and rocking make-up always help redeem my self-esteem...

But even when I have a purse full of loot?

The fact that I feel empty is my personal truth...

And I’ve been trying to fill the void with men who, mentally? Are really boys

But this whole time?

I’ve really been searching for you...

Daddy...

Daddy...

Is That You?
The Fortress...

Testing, testing...
Testing, one...two...
Testing....
Testing...

No, this isn’t a mic I checked, as you might have guessed...

I’m referring to our life; this quest where strategizing is vital, like in chess; I’m referring to the...

Test of patience because we’re stressed from waiting for equal treatment and reparations; expecting payments that will never appear until we together reveal our separation of independence in a declaration to connect our nation with no question marks, just exclamation points...

Until then? We’ll continue to decorate the joints with street names scribbled next to gang symbols on stained walls in the same halls that contain raw pain;

Naw...

No changed laws...

Just chains...bars...

Shame...scars...

And rainfall....

And they wonder why we remain flawed...

Is it because this gets worst with strip searches and trained dogs that enter domains; paws trampling over playing cards and family pictures, which CO’s feel can be ripped up and considered trash; disposing of whatever can fit in bags with bitter laughs; high-fiving as they split and smash; disrespecting possessions, hoping to hit a stash?

Or is it because I love to sit and brag about my days of getting cash and living fast that didn’t last; skipping class because I hated making sacrifices, I was too attached to vices; trying to purchase happiness, thinking I had to buy this; because even though it was only temporary?

If, for now, that suffices?

Then PLEASE pass the price list...

I was a slave to the desires I craved to acquire, not noticing the flames getting higher; now I’m caged with the tigers...
Lions and bears; surrounded by razor wire high in the air while I cry in despair, because it wasn’t until NOW that I decided to care about The Fortress...

See, It hit me like a train collision; tired of the life I’m ashamed of living and my brain’s division between the right choices and insane decisions that I’m strangely driven to make due to the furious battle between spirit and matter; it’s a...

Clash of the titans up under flashes of lightning and thunder as brigades of troops raise salutes and make way for Truth, who comes forward with its sword unsheathed; ready for war with beasts that gorge and feast on souls and weak minds; they’re known to...

 Creep from darkness, attacking with strong forces; these foes are...

 Demons marching and galloping on horses towards The Fortress; however, my...

 Mental temple is defensively solid; heavily guarded by Love, Truth, Peace, Freedom, and Justice; whose orders are to defeat and crush this horde...

 No blood and gore, but this war takes place on a daily basis, as if I’m stuck in some crazy Matrix where I’m both Neo AND Agent smith; my...

 Mind-state is split between the Great Abyss and the plane of this flesh; but...

 Until the day of my death?

 I still aim to protect...

 **The Fortress...**
TODAY...

TODAY, I AM ANGRY...

My mood is due to politicians pushing propaganda that's polluted and putrid with the shrewdest of prudence; cruel and just ruthless; they've...

Boxed me into a Cube that's a Rubik; how do I compute it, when it keeps shifting?

Come on, Rashad; think swiftly...

Because these slithering serpents may have seduced society, but I can see through the Medusas...

TODAY, I AM DISAPPOINTED...

In these lethargic artists, for putting out the stupidest music; but because of the beats and bass, people would rather be asleep than awake, so they boost the acoustics; even though all that's being presented are...

Foolish illusions that the clueless view in confusion; choosing what's used for amusement to form delusional conclusions, and I'm...

Just a student becoming affluent through improvement, and fusing influences that are congruent to the movement; with my...

Fist in the air as I commence to prepare for war; getting suited and booted; one of the truest to do this; the same dudes shooting and looting turn into Judas then lose it, and I...

Use what I'm producing to prove the truth is diluted; subdued, skewed and secluded, they make excuses to mute it...

TODAY, I AM FRUSTRATED...

I've have enough of this government; what they're selling? I can't buy it or stay quiet because the greats died for race pride; and to these...

Fascists, we're nothing but crabs in a bucket; trying to get out that hole, and we got "THAT" close before they put the top back on...

TODAY I'M IN PAIN...

Because time's hard, and the line's long at the lost & found from all those scarred souls trying to find God; and these people design laws to keep us behind bars while sipping on fine wine, and you see that they ride in cars that require chauffeurs;

There's NO words to describe how I feel today...

But tomorrow?

THE SUN WILL RISE AGAIN...
You Are Here

How did I get here?

Come on, Rashad; stop acting surprised...

You’re just another brother that the government had hypnotized and distracted by lies that were disguised as if this path of demise didn’t lead straight into a mass enterprise that makes cash and it thrives from being able to capitalize off of the cattle it hides from society’s proprieties; but I’m...

Fighting defiantly as they continue silently tying me by my feet to these railroad tracks; I can’t hold back and ain’t no slackin’ if I plan on dying free; and...

I finally realize and see that the stuff lodged in my subconscious was just nonsense, I saw its anatomy was full of flaws and it’s blasphemy was meant to mentally cause a catastrophe by knocking down the walls of reality, then installing these fallacies that get lodged in the cavities; and...

As I continue to climb, I see even more stairs that lead to the top floor, where I step out into the cold air; and...

Looking over the ledge, I’m so scared to fall off of the balcony; in this spiritual warfare I’ve endured enough losses and casualties to come to my senses, so I brought in the cavalry and once I had a clear view of the battlefield and saw it all in totality? I knew I had to find a new strategy to gain knowledge of self and a Higher Power, which I wouldn’t acquire in these Godless academies; now?

I know about my nationality; I am supreme, bloodline of kings; please, call me “your majesty”; and...

How I see No Limits, I ought to be Master P as I paint these vivid images, every thought is a masterpiece, ignoring the laws of gravity as I raised them to infinite wisdom; I had to jog at a faster speed if I planned on crossing the galaxy; I...

Cleaned out my temple because it was evident that skeletons filled every closets capacity, and it was either...

Wake up or stay stuck, and if minutes were money? Then I deserve a pay cut, because as I...

Gaze at the clock on the shelf, it’s obvious I wasted time like a watch on my belt...

Not realizing the enemy I fought was myself...

You are here...
Love, you must be some type of a joke, more than likely a hoax, and you’re trifling; I hope you get your license revoked, because you drive me INSANE; and I’m...

Stuck in an active loop that always leads me back to you, so perhaps this new woman I’m attracted to is probably the same as all of my exes; but...

My heart is just reckless, and it always collides with the train of thought from my logical brain; so...

Often times, when I’m guiding my aim towards a female? We fail, and I’m so tired of the lies and the games that I’ve got to complain; but...

My pride is to blame as to why I choose to reside in the flames, and...

You wouldn’t believe the size of the chains that have me tied and restrained to you; because it’s like I’m...

Hypnotized by the pain, it’s true; you’re like lines of cocaine or an addictive elixir mixed into a liquid, and cupid’s arrow is the needle lodged in my vein; l...

Despise when your name gets mentioned, because you always gain my attention with all of your fraudulent claims of being some...

Beautiful prize to attain that arrives in a plane and floats down from the skies like a saint; but...

I know your bright smile just disguises your fangs, and...

If I could ask ONE thing of you?

PLEASE clarify and explain why you’ve sucked me dry; I’ve been drained, and can’t even try to regain my strength; I’m at my weakest, so...

Whoever reads this? Please get the authorities and tell them that I died; I’ve been slain by love, and...

If my emotions aren’t lying outside in the rain and mud?

More than likely you’ve decided to hide the remains and gloves, and have already wiped up the stains of blood; and...

Probably can provide an alibi that contains a witness who’ll verify how the time that you came to visit shows your location during the crime and you ain’t who did it; so...

They’ll trick the police, and you’ll get to go free; then...

One day their precinct will receive an anonymous tip that my heart’s buried next to a Sycamore tree...

Hid below weeds...

Inside of a pit, mixed with old leaves...

LOVE STRIKES AGAIN...
I used to think you were beautiful...

In MY eyes? You were full of Saturday morning bike rides and flying kites in bright skies; glasses of spiced cider, ice cream and sliced pies; getting high-fives during fun with friends on jungle gyms with wide slides, and...

My parents were quite wise; telling little, white lies to keep the peace, then giving me sweet treats to eat when I cried; life had no strife, and my problems were bite-sized; but that was before the light died, and...

Despite my polite, shy, “Mr. Nice Guy/ Passive Dude” attitude? I was still your average fool; because...

Mentally? I lacked the tools for advancing through life; back in school? I’d skip class and shoot dice because the kids that were cool said I acted too white; bullies would snatch my food, so I had a few fights because...

Respect was something that I had to tussle to gain, and just to maintain my image? I switched up and I changed everything about myself except my government name; I wasn’t the same, so...

With reality? I lost touch and became one of the “Walking Dead”, a true zombie; no Jumanji, but I got stuck in the game then fell in love with the pain; I was...

On the warpath, my forecast showed nothing but rain; and I hung with a gang that was just as insane as me; a pack of vagabonds, but when I had a bond? Not one of them paid the fee; and my girlfriend cheated, she wasn’t the nun that she claimed to be; I was...

Shunned by my family because they were stunned and ashamed to see me thrown in prison, so I formed resentments and clung to them angrily; until I saw the REAL enemy, now I’m done with the blaming spree...

I used to think you were beautiful...

Full of puppy love, extended lip locks and expensive gifts bought just because; but...

That was before my feelings were tossed to the floor; walked on, destroyed; scuffed and rubbed in the dust and mud; buffed then covered with an ugly rug; before the...

Hard scrapes and scars made from claws raked across my heart’s face caused breaks that couldn’t be fixed with scotch tape; it was...
Split in half, and with every relationship? I’d hit the gas, but couldn’t prevent the crash; and I didn’t have Allstate; I...

Started getting rid of artificial friends, because I saw snakes carrying odd crates into my castle; intending to tear it down, wearing smiles that were all fake, as there were bombs place at my wall’s base; but thankfully, all of the...

Rotten garbage got discarded; and now? I’m awfully guarded, I keep barking dogs at my yard’s gate; and creeping mist hides the deepest pits where you’ll fall straight onto tall stakes, and I...

Keep my emotions locked inside of a small safe hidden in a crawl space where they’ll stay concealed, surrounded by plates of steel; out of harm’s way...

I used to think you were beautiful...

Back when I used to sit at home and make tunes until my ace-boons hit my phone, then I’d trick a loan out of my pops so that later we could...

Lift Patron out of the box and sip until it was gone; twisted Swishers blown, getting stoned during trips to 6 Flags; wearing ball caps with the stickers on, plus...

Expensive kicks matched with fits that dripped swag; and we didn’t rip tags off...

Because back then?

The fad was to leave them on so people saw how much our rags cost; but...

That was before the “licks” I hit for quick cash, and before popping all of those pills I slipped out of zipped bags; it was...

Before the roaches and rats, and the rust in the water that flowed from the tap; before being homeless with little more than the clothes on my back, went to job interviews hiding holes in my slacks; I...

Penny-pinched and grew envious of the dope-boys who stood over stoves with “the pack”, transforming coke into crack; wearing torn ‘beaters and old sneakers, hair grown into dreads; they don’t...

Know Jesus, but are “turning stones into bread”; on the block, posted with straps, smoking their sacks just to cope with the fact that there’s no hope in the trap; where friends and family get...
Clapped with no suspects, but we still chose to adapt to being crabs in a closed bucket with nobody to open the hatch; going from...

Sitting on thrones, getting fed, to getting thrown in the Feds by crooked cops posing as “cats”; I’ve passed by plenty of police paddy wagons that had my partners loaded in back...

I used to think you were beautiful...

But that was back in the day before I happened to stray off of the path that was paved; and...

Even though a map was displayed? I still got trapped in a maze, and didn’t realize it until they had locked the latch on the cage; and...

Now? I’m a captive, a slave; being served slop that gets slapped onto trays; months morph into years, I’m losing track of the days; my soul is tattered and frayed, patched up with plaster and clay; and...

People think because I’m in darkness that my passion will fade, but I just strike a match in the cave until it catches ablaze; and my...

Foes are disguised as allies; they’re just actors on stage who have mastered charades; I’ve been attacked and betrayed, my back is packed full of blades; and my lower-self has the biggest ax, just hacking away; and...

They started heaving taxes on the snacks that I pay for, but I’m still receiving scraps for my contractual wage, though; and...

PD’s are seen as slacking because they stack up their caseloads, and these lawyers leap to action for a sack full of pesos; but...

I’m not rich, nor do I have a secret stash; had some people in my corner, but they started leaving fast; a couple stayed, but what they say and what they mean seems to clash; said they’d help if I needed cash, but when I ask them? They claim broke, so I...

Grind at a fine pace, because I know that time waits for no man; but it seems like every time I make bold plans to grow and embrace God’s love? I trip and fall on hard luck and my devil decides to spark up a romance, so we hold hands and slow dance to old jams; therefore, I...

Can’t relax or just lay down for a nap in the shade, because he’s on an active crusade; in fact, I’m afraid; because through all of my trials, regrets and tribulations I was blessed with the gift of patience, but the next situation might just make me snap in a rage before all of the factors get weighed; because...
My brain is strapped with grenades...
And I know the blast will create a massive disastrous wave of the hazardous wrath that I crave...

I used to think you were beautiful...

But not anymore...
Insert coins...

I search the Earth in hyper mode, every night I take flight and go; I like to roam through the streets, setting my sights on those who are too weak to try and fight my hold; I’m...

Not a shoe thief, but I’m swiping souls to place them under my control; I’ll light the nodes on your brain’s mainframe as I type in the deciphered code that’ll help you leap even higher and unleash your deepest desires for the things you admire, all you have to do is...

Reach in this fire, and...

Anything you pull out?

You can keep once acquired, but after the lease has expired? You’ll still owe a fee; because I’m giving you the best things in life, and I know you don’t think THOSE are free; I...

Hold the golden key, and your soul will belong to me; I blow the trees with the highest potency, so watch as I...

Puff, puff, pass this grass to the masses; and as they inhale, then tap off the ashes? I push them into a cage that I’ve crafted and trap them in with a nest of tarantulas hatching as I...

Close the lid and fasten the latches, go get a can of gas and some matches, then set it all ablaze; I’m the quarterback, and I call the plays; people get lost in my magnificent mansion and end up wandering my halls for days, weeks...

Months, YEARS...

And I love seeing courage become fear as you realize that everything you thought was once real is just a mirage; why place your trust in a God that doesn’t provide this much of a ride? My...

Roller-Coaster is full of overdoses and has some mean loop de loops; distracting your conscience with nonsense about green Gucci suits...

You seem truly spooked, but don’t be afraid...

Because this thing called life?

Is only a game...

At least to me...

Continue?

10...

9...

8...
Acknowledgements

First and Foremost, To The Creator...
Universal Intelligence...The Great Infinite Mind that created this earthly vessel that I travel my journey in. Thank you for the many life lessons and also for blessing me with the gifts of expression that I now utilize to the best of my ability...Regardless of the obstacles place in my path, I know that you will give me the strength to overcome and reach the level of success that I desire if I keep you in the forefront...

To my parents...
Even though you didn’t birth me, you’ve always had unconditional love for me and were always there throughout my many tragedies and triumphs. Thank you for that, for providing me with the best life coming up that a child could ask for, and also for always encouraging me to “bloom where I’m planted” and not to EVER give up...

To Deron, Jannie, and Crystal...
Thank you for continuing to be there for me throughout my incarceration and for still being the closest thing to sisters and a brother that I’ve ever had. (You too, Casey...and I can’t forget Courtney and Ju-Jul; wherever you may be...thank you, my friends...) Ju-Ju I sincerely apologize for the past and for messing up a great friendship. Crystal, thank you for forgiving me for the wrongs I’ve done to you and for still allowing me to be a part of your life...it truly shows how wonderful of a person you are...
To Jeremy and Shayla...
Thank you for being the blessing that helped me to move on to the next stage of my journey and start getting my music out to the world...Without you? There probably never would have been a “Letter to God” in the first place! THANK YOU!

To Algeretta...
You KNOW this wouldn’t be complete without including you in it! Thank you for always being there for me in whatever way you could...I know we’ve had our ups and downs, but what matters is that we still have that connection after all of this time...Thank you for always being the crazy, yet amazing person that you are; and for never telling me what I WANTED to hear, but what I NEEDED to hear...And also for all of the deep, honest, hilarious, and wild conversations we’ve had over the years...(A pocket knife though?!) And YES! I’m still going to take ya’ll to a Star Trek convention one day, and put you in a Benz as well...if you ever learn how to drive! (Yea, I just put you on blast! lol)...I’m glad to have you as a friend!

To Amara (and Family)...
For still being a constant in my life after all this time (how long has it been now? 13...14 years?) and NEVER switching up on me, even after I got locked up...You are a beautiful person, both inside and out, and I definitely hope that you accomplish all of the goals and endeavors that you have...YOU CAN DO IT! I know the road has been hard, but just keep grinding and you’ll make it...BELIEVE IN YOURSELF! Thank you all for your continued love and support!
To Myera...

YES! YOU! lol...We’ve DEFINITELY had our moments (2 years, Mya!?) but you know we’re ALWAYS going to be good! BELIEVE THAT! Yea, I may get frustrated with you at times, but I get it...And I want to thank you for your loyalty and for holding on after all this time even though we both know you could have just kept it pushing... Also, thank you for always being real, for your sound advice, and for always keeping it 100 about everything we’ve ever discussed and about life in general...That’s hard to find nowadays in a world full of sugar-coaters, around-the-bush beaters, and dream sellers... Hope I don’t get you in trouble lol... “We so disrespectful” –inside joke–

To Mrs. Reynolds...

Thank you for always being a listening ear, for being the connecting link between me and Mya every since way back when... and for usually taking my side when I call you to vent about her! lol. Also, thank you for being such a positive and uplifting force in my life. Every time I’ve gotten off of the phone with you I’ve always felt re-energized...Those birthday and holiday dinners when I get out are a PROMISE!

To kiera...

I know it may surprise you to see your name included here, but it wouldn’t be right if I didn’t thank you as well for being the inspiration behind some of these poems, for the good times, and for helping me to break a cycle that I’ve been putting myself through for many years so that I could finally move on to a new chapter in my life...Also, I want to thank you for the various lessons that I learned through you, both good and bad...And for being the female version of me, so that I could see myself more clearly...

I wish you peace, love, and much happiness!
Also, Thank You...

To: 'shea (RIP), Ryan (RIP), Ms. Purham (RIP), Baba OJ (RIP),
Paulette Jackson and my “BANDITS” Fam, Jennifer Garcías, Johnson-Bey,
Tison-E, Sykes-E, Butler-E, Harrison-E, Jackson-Bey, Smith-E, Hester-Bey,
Jones-Bey, Duke-Bey, Riee-E, Jay-Ray, Antwann Johnson,
AD (You have officially been kicked out of “The Font Family”! lol), Saji, Shou,
Black, Ethan and Chad Harvey, Daniel Taft, Jamel Summers, LC,
My mentor Big Reggie #FREEREGGIEYOU, Durrell Lewis,
The Michael Porter #POWERlfe(lol), Reginald Cunningham, Andre Buehannan,
Anthony Ramsey, Timothy Gilbert, Aunt Pat & Uncle Emerson, Aunt Trish,
Aunt Beverly, Aunt Carolyn, Aunt Gladys, Uncle Charles, Mark Chappell AKA
Donnie Ink, Lea’Johna Sanders AKA Tru Sav, Lexi’ AKA Alexia Monet, Ebony,
Igana, Ademlu and the whole “I Hate Rashad Squad” (lol),
Mike Lester AKA “Mix-Master Massive Melon Mike” (lol), Miranda Lee,
Mr. Anderson, Harold Meadows AKA “Come-Thru McGee” (lol)...

Last, but not least, my “sister-from-another-mother” Lisa Kinsler...Be sure
to check out her book “we are who we are” (all lower-case) as well as her
future releases at Amazonecom.

Thank you to all those whose stories inspired my poetry and also
those who helped me to keep pushing forward, either through
positive motivation or by turning your backs and dismissing
me...Either way, it only continues to fuel my motivation to grind
EVEN HARDER and create my own testimony of success through
hard work and perseverance...
Finally, Thank YOU...

The reader...

For taking the time to read this poetry book and experiencing a part of me that it took a long time to cultivate...

May you find the courage to break out of your own shell, grow, and flourish...

Never doubt your own strength...you can do it!

I wish you well...

Take Care...
My full name is Rashad Amir El. My first name means “Magistrate of conduct”, my middle name means “A ruler or a prince”, and my last name means “Master of the day of judgment”. I was born on May 22nd, 1986 in Rockford, IL. I was raised in Milwaukee, WI and moved to St. Louis, MO in 2007. I unfortunately fell victim to the allure of the streets, and in 2010 I was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences for a home invasion gone bad; a crime which I’m truly remorseful for. Despite the odds, I feel that I have a good chance of regaining my freedom. Therefore, I’ve put in the necessary effort to grow by leaps and bounds in many different areas throughout my incarceration. I’ve also come to the realization that I’ve allowed the fact that I’m adopted to unconsciously rule my life and govern my thoughts and actions ever since I was a child.

Although my adopted parents truly love me and gave me the best life that they could have possibly provided, I threw away and self-sabotaged almost every good opportunity and close relationship that came my way throughout the extent of my lifetime due to the fact I knew my adoption was “closed”; meaning that my birth mother did not wish to be found. The knowledge of this caused me to unconsciously feel like I wasn’t worthy of love, happiness or anything good out of life. As an adult, I am just now truly coming to the point of discovering who I am as a person, my purpose, and the potential within myself that has laid dormant for so long due to my yearn to be wanted, needed, and accepted by the people around me.

I’m now on a journey to pick up the remaining pieces and remnants left behind from the wrecking ball of destruction I have been for so long, and transform into the person I desire to be; a productive member of society as well as an example of what success looks like when a person makes the conscious decision to grind hard and focus on their objectives regardless of the obstacles.

I have a strong desire to love and be loved in a relationship setting, and to be with a woman who is willing to give me her all regardless of my circumstances. I know that in order to truly be an asset within a relationship, I first have to love myself or else I will only be searching externally for something to fill the internal void. Having this knowledge, I’ve accepted the fact that I have to face the huge obstacle of tackling my abandonment issues in order to progress and grow into the man that I want to be on every level. I wish to marry and have children one day, and I want to be the best husband/father that I can be for my future wife and kids.
I have a strong desire to love and be loved in a relationship setting, and to be with a woman who is willing to give me her all regardless of my circumstances. I know that in order to truly be an asset within a relationship, I first have to love myself or else I will only be searching externally for something to fill the internal void. Having this knowledge, I’ve accepted the fact that I have to face the huge obstacle of tackling my abandonment issues in order to progress and grow into the man that I want to be on every level. I wish to marry and have children one day, and I want to be the best husband/father that I can be for my future wife and kids.

Along with eventually finding my birth family (I recently found out that I have at least 3 brothers and 3 sisters that I’ve never met) I wish to make amends, in any way possible, to the many people I have hurt in different ways throughout my lifetime. Also, I wish to achieve as much as I can within my current situation so that I can be off to a good start when I am blessed with my release back into society. I have set many goals for myself while being incarcerated, as well as for when I get out. I can never be too prepared to re-enter society, and I plan to do whatever is necessary to make my transition as comfortable as possible. I know now that I can accomplish whatever I set my mind to if I continue to work hard and push through obstacles, so my goal is to continue moving forward regardless of the setbacks and fears that may pop up along the road of my journey.

Since being incarcerated, I have completed many institutionally-offered classes and programs, including graduating from the ITC program. I have also written 10 mixtapes, 3 of which have been copyrighted under the collective title “The N.I.N.J.A. Chronicles”. I am in the process of releasing 4 recently recorded mixtapes online along with an eventual EP and I am currently ghostwriting for 2 aspiring, young rap artists in the free world. I plan to start 2 clothing lines and find investors for them while I am incarcerated, and also lay the foundation for the record label and a non-profit organization I plan to start upon my release. The non-profit organization will focus on at-risk youths and those in low-income neighborhoods and help them with cultivating their talents and formulating entrepreneurial skills so that they can learn to generate funds for themselves in a positive manner. I also have smaller endeavors planned for once I am back in society such as starting 2 magazines (one for men and one for women) as well as a program that is geared towards catering to the needs and desires of those who are incarcerated and helping them to also generate revenue for themselves and avoid the pitfalls of hustling in a negative manner.
MUSIC (RASHAD ILL):
Http://www.xi34.com/Rashad-ILL
Http://RashadILL.bandcamp.com/album/hell-high-water

Hell + High Water: The A capella Sessions
(Mixtape) Out 11/2018

Coming Soon...

Since I’ve Been Away...
(Mixtape)

Wordplay RAE
(Mixtape)
Also coming soon...

The Rise & Fall of Forever...
(Mixtape)

Chaos Theory...
(Mixtape)

OPTIMUS...
(Mixtape)
Also coming soon:

**LITERARY**

(Un)Spoken Word...

The Truth About Me, You, And Today’s Society

This is actually the first poetry book that I finished, but it will be the second one to get published. It is a compilation of spoken word poems addressing many different topics that people are uncomfortable with speaking on as well as a lot of my personal truths that I have come to realize about life and the world around me (Some of the poems in this book actually originated from that one). As of this current moment, it is in the process of being completed publishing-wise and, when finished, will be available through Smashwords.com.

Letters I Never Sent...

I used to have a bad habit of writing impulse-letters based upon how I was feeling at that moment about a particular situation and sending them out before I had a chance to calm down and think rationally about things. They usually ended up making the situation worse than it already was, so I started saving the ones I wrote instead of putting them in the mail. This book will be a compilation of many such letters that I’ve written in the past out of anger, spite, sadness, depression, frustration, hate, love, lust, etc. The majority of these have never been sent, but I’m also including some that I DID send (and wish that I hadn’t!) These are letters meant for old flames, people I lost contact with, those I needed to make amends with but never had the chance to, and even a few that I’ve wrote to myself as a form of release. Brutally honest, open, and candid; this book is pure emotion on paper...

Prison Effed My Feet Up: The Mixtape

This book expresses the multitude of life lessons I have learned while growing up, and especially while being incarcerated. Hopefully it will also debunk some of the myths about people who are incarcerated because I plan to set the record straight regarding a variety of topics. My crazy sense of humor and love for music is sprinkled throughout this autobiographical project as well.
Also coming soon:

CLOTHING LINES:

GRIND-STATE UNIVERSITY

GRIND-STATE UNIVERSITY™

TARGET PRACTICE

TARGET PRACTICE
Also coming soon:

COMPANIES:

Grind Over Chatter Entertainment

Brew City ON Publishing Company
CONNECT WITH RASHAD

WRITE RASHAD AT:
Rashad El #1179337
Jefferson City Correctional Center
8200 No More Victims Rd.
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Pictures must be sent in an envelope by themselves (separately from cards or letters) with minimal writing on the back of them.
10 pictures maximum per envelope.

ADD RASHAD ON FACEBOOK:
"Rashad El"
OR
@WerdzMcgee (Artist page)

ADD RASHAD ON TWITTER:
@Rashad_ILL

E-MAIL RASHAD AT:
777Elbey777@gmail.com
OR
By setting up an account at http://www.jpay.com
Must have my name (Rashad El), inmate number (1179337),
and current camp (Jefferson City Correctional Center located under
Missouri Department of Corrections)
e-mails are .25 cents each once the account is created...

If you like the music and my poetry, join #TeamILLY and PLEASE spread the word
 to help me to promote them,
THANK YOU!!!
Dear God,

Please accept this letter as a token of gratitude, because you’ve opened this avenue; despite the fact that I hope with an attitude sometimes...

Because you know I get mad at you sometimes...

It’s sad but true; because my heart’s been ravaged through, and my pain added to; but I got tired of complacency, so I HAD to move...

I did that to prove I could better myself; I’ve been wrestling, trying not to give my devil the belt; and yea, a woman who cares and writes letters would help, but...

I’m tired of taking love that expires, then breaking up, and I’m tired of placing trust in liars with no faith in us; so...

God I choose to embrace my solitude; doing what I’ve got to do because I know I came out of the blue with these flaws...

Lately, the weather’s been brutally cold, but as I started to unfold?

The sun rose; and...

I dropped seeds into the cracks in the concrete, hoping one grows and blooms, emancipated...

But I’ve been battling with the task of waiting while I’m on this path I’m taking; lack of patience got me going back to trading daps with Satan...

It’s a habitual ritual due to vanity; insanity; I’m trying to show my family the man in me...

Because I plan to be better; even surrealists feel this; God, I’m living in a fantasy era....
Because people are reaching for Heaven, but they're mentally stuck in Hell because they see and want to be everything but themselves; and I'm...

Spiraling into despair like I ain't get the strike; and...
Prepping for the next plane like I missed a flight; and...

I've been trying to get the temple in my mental right, because prison life will cripple and wither quicker than Kryptonite to Clark Kent; I'm in darkness;

God, hit the lights, please...

No more sagging jeans and loose-fitting white tees, I'm grown now...

Being out on my own has me missing home now; and...

Fair-weather friends won't even answer the phone now, to deal with everything I just write this music and zone out; and...

During the darkest of hours, you filled my heart with the power to slip through the grips of the vicious net of building a prison rep and concealing my intellect just to feel like I get respect in this jungle of lost souls...

But I'm stuck at a crossroads, because when you open a door? I want to rush through, but...I'm still afraid to fully trust you; and...

Yes, I believe in Jesus, but I'm not as tough as him, beating these demons got me huffing and puffing from tussling; and hustling for sustenance comes with subsequent punishments, but I want to get accustomed to something other than struggling...

It seems like the path keeps getting rougher, man; trying to manage these challenges got me suffering...and really? I've had enough of them, but honestly? I've come too far to be giving up again; so as I'm passing your tests in rapid succession,

Can I NOW ask for a blessing?
Because I’m lacking protection, and the inner-me is the enemy attacking with weapons; and I’m using passive-aggression as an act of suppression, as I clash with depression and digressing back to the stressing and smoking…

I have to confess that I’m broken…

In my raps I address these emotions…

And now that they’re expressed in the open?

I guess I’m just hoping that maybe you’ll lighten the load, while I fight for control of the life that I chose; despite all my foes and the ice in my soul that has no reason to melt; and…

I think I’m finally SEEING myself, so…

As I reach in the depths? I believe, with your help, I will rise…

Because I’m BEING myself…

No disguise or mask…

Except the pain, which I hide with laughs; and…

It’s quite a task, but…

I made it my mission to aim at my vision with amazing precision, even as I strain through resistance…So as I sit on this crate in the kitchen; escaping from prison through this music, trying not to lose it?

Truth is, I want to thank you for blessing me with a strong will, these raw skills, and the strength for climbing these tall hills…

Because I used to be quiet and all chill, now they’re hearing me roar…

Sincerely Yours, Forever…

Rashad El…
Dear _____,

Well, I did a lot of thinking last night about this situation with you and I realized that you’re right...we’re better off as friends, because I’ve been fighting a losing battle...I shouldn’t be accepting anything less out of a relationship than what I truly want, regardless of if I’m locked up or not; and I’ve been allowing you to treat me any kind of way, stomp all over my emotions, and carry me like a lame ass dude just on the strength that I’m down...and I’ve been continuously giving you a spot relationship-wise that you haven’t even really earned for real...I lost myself in you and in my yearn for us to be together because I fell so hard for you and I guess you could say I just had to come to my senses about things...

I think it really hit me when you made that f*cked-up comment on the phone last night right before we got off about not writing me...that sh*t was uncalled for and it hurt, but I see now how I allowed the fact that I’m in this situation to lower my self-esteem and self-worth...that, in turn, affected what I’m willing to accept in a relationship setting to the point of where I was settling for that type of treatment just for the sake of being with you, not having to start all the way back at square one, and being in a relationship that I initially thought was what I wanted out of a connection with a woman...and also I was trying to show you that I was different...
I don't know what happened to the ________ that I fell in love with, but even after everything you've put me through, I still got love for you... even though I really just wanted to say "**F**uck you, ________" on a couple of different occasions... I've sat and tolerated all types of shit from you and tried to be as patient and loving as I can, but I guess shit just don't get through to you unless somebody talking crazy to yo "ss because that's all you know how to deal with... Like I said, you really showed how you felt about me and my well-being when you turned your back on me when I needed you financially... especially with your reasoning for it... I would have actually rather you had lied to me and told me you had got robbed and somebody stole your phone or you was laid up in the hospital or something than to have told me what you said your reasoning was... and now you saying that you ain't got time to come down here to see me after all the work it took for me to get you on my list and after all the excuses you done gave me is f*cked up, but I just hope that one day you realize that sometimes what you want could be right there in your face but you're too blinded by other things to see it...

To be completely honest? I think you're still in love with your baby's father, and the fact that he steady be on some bullshit with you spills over into our relationship and causes you to be on some bullshit with me when I ain't got nothing to do with that... I could be wrong, but that's just how I feel because I've seen the baby momma/baby daddy drama before to know what it looks like,
which is why i’m leery about entering situations like that in the first place...guys feel entitled because that’s the woman they got pregnant and the women still have attachments for their own reasons and for the sake of family or whatnot...i should have known i was entering a no-win situation from jump because with all the sht you said you did for him after he got out and for him to flex on you like he did i should have already figured i ain’t have sht coming even though my intentions was pure...that dude and all the other ones before him scarred you so badly that you wouldn’t know a good dude if he literally fell out the sky and landed on your windshield while you were driving to work...because you won’t even give him a chance to experience the real you before you close yourself back up again and push him away...and that’s how you’ve been doing with me since day one...

you say we moved too fast...and at first i agreed with you, but now? i feel like if the connection is that strong and that real, then who is to say how fast or slow love is supposed to move? ok, yea...we could have spent more time getting to know the ins and outs of each other, but, to me? sht was perfect...and i can’t help but to think that sht was perfect for you, too...at least until you freaked out and started feeling like things were too perfect...like there was a trick to it or something...and now? no matter how much i try to love yo *ss and show you i ain’t gon hurt you, you refuse to open up long enough to let me in that muf*cka without hurting me in the process...you steady tell me it ain’t intentional...but let’s be real...it is...because it’s your automatic reflex barrier...with you? there’s no middle ground or balance...it’s either hurt or be hurt...so whenever sht starts going too smoothly you self-sabotage because of that dude...
I know that what baffled you about me is regardless of how much bullsh*t you was on, I refused to give up on you or get on some BS back with you...except for when I sent that f*cked-up letter...which honestly wasn’t even all that f*cked-up given the situation...It could have been a LOT worst...And maybe it should have been...because by me trying to be on some mature shit, all I’ve been doing is giving you a pass for your behavior and basically telling you that regardless of how you treat me I’m still gonna come running back for more...With all this back-and-forth shit I go through with you, I just honestly don’t know how to love you without receiving some type of backlash from it or being hurt in the process...You say “hold on”, then you say “let go”...You tell me we’re together, then you tell me that you just want to be friends...You tell me to be patient with you, then you tell me to go on about my business...Honestly? I don’t even think YOU know what the f*ck you want...Because we go through the same repetitive cycle...We get back together...shit is good for a little bit...We fall out over some petty bullsh*t, then you push me away...AGAIN...And we’re just stuck in this toxic s**s loop, and I keep going for it...No more, though...
"TOKEN BLACK/WHITE PERSON" RULES OF ETIQUETTE

- Educate yourself on whatever setting you will be entering as a token black/white person to ensure the best possible experience for yourself and those around you. Be sure to do your research on the latest news and trends within the black/white community so that you are not caught off-guard by any questions regarding such news.

  For example: if being invited to dinner by your black girlfriend and you are white, do your homework on the different types of condiments black people enjoy on their food as well as the proper way to “add soul” while cooking a dish.

  Another example: if you are being invited to meet your white girlfriend’s family for the first time, either leave your phone in the car, turn it off, or be sure to change all of your ringtones to crossover/pop songs. The worst thing you can do is to all of a sudden have the hook to Webbie’s “Gutta B*tch” blasting at full phone volume while trying to convince your girlfriend’s father that you are a swell guy.

- If offered any dish that is a known delicacy within the group’s race (i.e. gizzards to black people and sweet potato casserole to white people), show your willingness to at least sample it, even if it is your first time doing so. (Bonus points for commenting on how delicious it is, but don’t overdo it)

- Be prepared to answer random questions about your race that people in the group have been dying to ask someone white/black, but didn’t want to offend anybody. For example,

  “We get it in to R&B music…what do white people have sex to?”

  And

  “Why do you guys wear do - rags even when you’re not trying to get waves?”

- If you are black and your group of white friends invites you to go anywhere with them past 6 PM, you are officially their “hood pass” for the night. Your presence grants them access to (and passage in) places where they normally would be too timid to go by themselves. Even if you don’t have a hood bone in your body, tonight is your night to shine and be the fake thug you’ve always wanted to be. Just don’t act TOO black, or you will scare your group into never inviting you to another function ever again.
For example: If you and your group stops at a gas station, DON’T offer to pay for everyone’s snacks on your EBT card. If you go to a fancy restaurant DON’T mispronounce the name of whatever dish you are ordering or use the wrong silverware for the wrong shit.

- If you are white and your group of black friends invites you to go anywhere with them past 6 PM, you are officially their ambassador/translator for the night. Your presence grants them access to (and passage in) places where they normally would be too black to gain entry by themselves. Be sure to study up on the latest ebonics and be prepared to use it in its proper form and fashion in order to gain the admiration and respect of those around you. Do NOT do, say, or wear, anything that is considered outdated to black people. Research the life span of any term, clothing, dance, or act you plan to utilize. You will only get one “oh, it’s because they’re white” pass for that night. Anything past that? and you’re toast (and it is quite likely that you may get discarded on the spot for a fill-in token white person)...

- NEVER allow your full blackness/whiteness to show in whichever social setting you are invited to, it may disturb those who are accompanying and/or observing you. Only show enough to make the group comfortable with your presence.

- Be sure that you are the only “token black/white” in whichever group your presence has been summoned by, or else you will find yourself battling for “token supremacy” with whomever else is occupying the token slot with you. (If there is an even mix of races within the group, this rule is null and void).

- NEVER admit to being the token black/white person if questioned by anyone, especially someone outside the group, regarding your status with your peers. Make a joke of it, then immediately change the subject. If worse comes to worse and your back is against the wall, aggressively challenge the person to a dance or freestyle battle and proceed to belittle the questioning party if they don’t accept it. The sudden shift from offense to defense will more than likely cause them to back down. At the very least, it will dramatically shift the focus of the conversation (even if you can’t dance or rap worth a lick)...

TO BE CONTINUED...